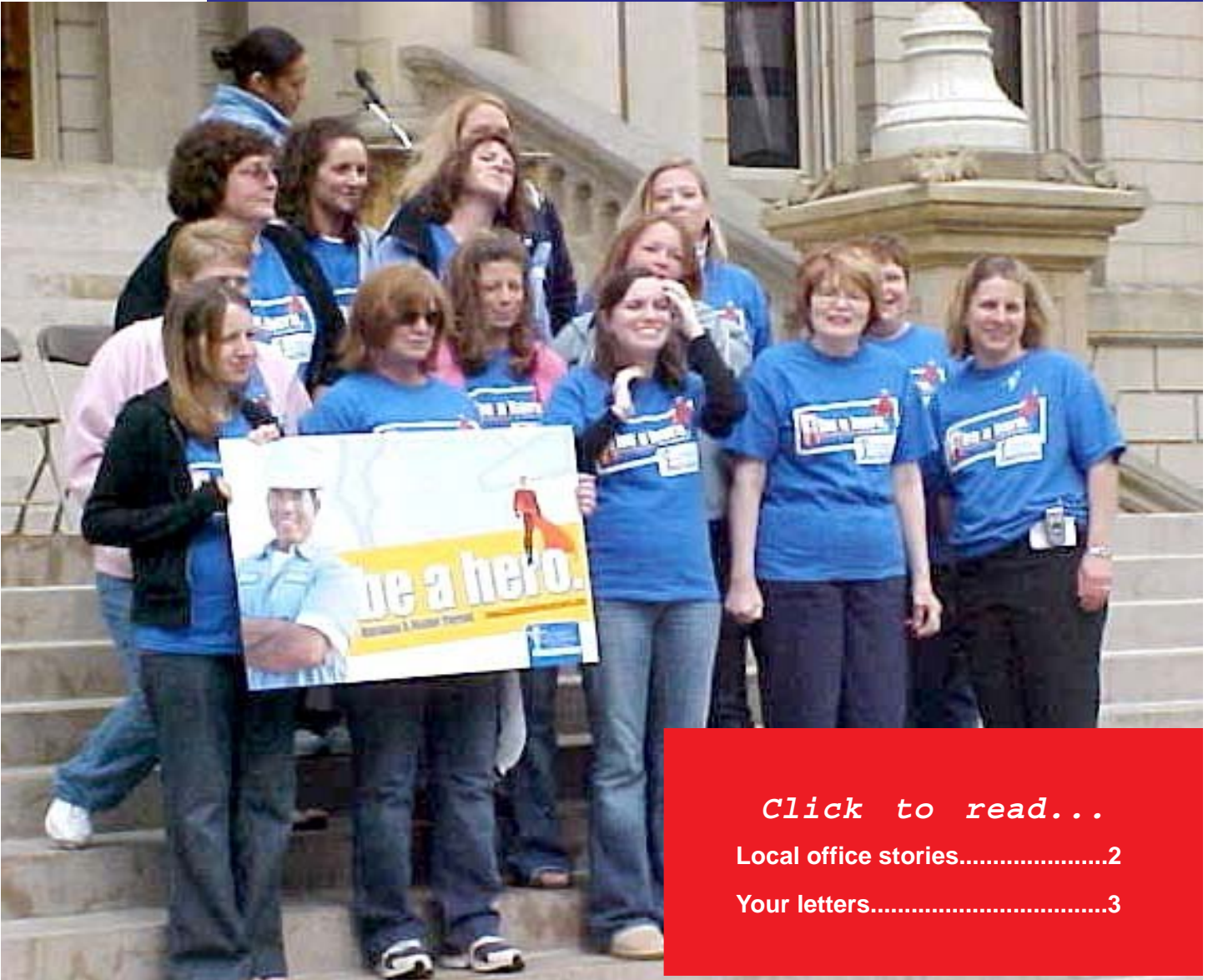




DHS Matters!

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Produced by DHS Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing
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Members of Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents on the steps of the state Capitol with their simple message about foster parenting: "Be a hero."

Foster parents needed in Michigan

LANSING – About 50 people gathered during a cold, wet and blustery day May 17 to celebrate Foster Care Month in Michigan during the annual rally at the state Capitol. With 18,500 children in Michigan's foster care system, the need for stable, secure and loving foster and adoptive parents is great.

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm declared May as Foster Care Month. To celebrate, an information fair and news conference was held at the Capitol steps and east lawn. The fair kicked off the state conference organized by the Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents. Speakers at the Capitol event May 17 included DHS director Marianne Udow, Elizabeth Carey of Michigan Federation of Children and Families, foster parents and former foster children.

"Today we celebrate this month-long appreciation of foster parents and the immense gift they provide to children in Michigan," Carey said. "Every day they make a difference in a child's life. Every day they provide love and refuge for children in crisis. Every day they are heroes. I personally and on behalf of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, thank each and every one."



DHS graduates (front from left): **Michele Gouin**, Roscommon County; **Celia Ann Young**, Arenac County; **Kara Mularz**, Ogemaw County; **Susan K. Hartz**, Ogemaw County. Back row from left: **Lori Turner**, Isabella County, **Lucy Lloyd**, Oscoda County, **Dawn Trapp**, Saginaw County, **Amanda Moran** and **Kay Zofchak** from Saginaw County.

DHS grads earn their MSW from Grand Valley State University program

From Lori Turner, MSW
Children's Protective Services
Isabella DHS, Mt. Pleasant
TurnerL4@michigan.gov

Nine DHS employees graduated earlier in May as part of Grand Valley State University's School of Social Work class of 2007. These DHS employees earned their master's of social work degrees and were part of the GVSU Kirtland cohort based in Roscommon during the past three and one-half years.

The classes were held at Kirtland College and we were Grand Valley State University students taught by GVSU instructors. We managed to complete our studies while simultaneously attending to high caseloads and our busy lives. We managed to put a lot of time and effort into achieving the degrees along with over 900 hours of internship within our DHS agencies.

Special donation becomes an incredible day for Ionia resident

By Terry King, Community Resource Coordinator
Ionia-Montcalm DHS, Stanton
King T2@michigan.gov



Steve Smith & Terry King

An Ionia County resident recently lost his wife to illness. In spite of his tremendous loss he did not allow his grief to overcome him. He felt compelled to donate his wife's beautiful power wheel chair to the Ionia County Department of Human Services. It was quite a gift once I discovered exactly what he was giving. The chair was only slightly used and not in the least inexpensive. It was one of the most generous donations the department has ever received. It has many special features that I am sure will be enjoyed by the recipient.

After several applicants we found 44-year-old Steve Smith, who was ideal for the power chair's weight and size requirements. Smith was born with very rare bone disease that allowed him to walk up until the age of 18 when, as he puts it, things caught up with him. Steve does his own yard work and explains that the tires are going to be excellent for the outdoors. Smith put together a nice thank you for the donor and was all smiles during the recent exchange.

Date: May 11
To: Alan Kimichik, Director
DHS Office of Inspector General
Lansing
Subj: Dean and Andy

I would like to tell you how I appreciate a couple of your employees.

Today at lunch, my coworker and I were stranded on the side of the road and two of your employees in the Saginaw office, Dean and Andy (**Andy Kustowski** & **Dean Booms**) took out time from their busy schedule to assist my coworker and me. Once we identified the problem, they went out of their way to provide solutions.

It is times like these that I am thankful that the woes of state employment do not outweigh the hearts of good Samaritans. Thanks again to both Dean and Andy.

Montrelle Baldwin, Human Resource Developer
DHS Child Welfare Institute, Lansing

■ Andrew Kustowski is a regulation manager and Dean Booms is a regulation agent, both with Office of Inspector General in Saginaw.

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: May 10
To: DHS Matters!
Subj: Steve Coscarelli

Please extend kudos (many thanks) to Steve Coscarelli for his enhancement on CMT of the “citizenship” button. Staff and clients both were having a hard time securing legal birth certificates to show proof of citizenship. Steve was able to link CMT with birth records in Michigan so staff could access this information quickly. Many thanks to Steve for an innovation that was developed quickly and is so easy to use that instructions were not needed.

Brenda Hodson, Family Independence Manager
Muskegon DHS, Muskegon

■ CMT is Case Management Tools, a Web-based database that uses CIMS/ASSIST data from the Data Warehouse to populate commonly used FIS/ES Word templates. It also provides case management, reports, monitoring of case reviews, and filtering caseloads for certain data elements.

Date: Feb. 28
To: Barb Klingensmaier, CPS Manager
Muskegon DHS, Muskegon Heights
Subj: Lisa Smith

Note: The following message was delivered by telephone: I am not calling with a complaint or need to speak with you. I was calling concerning one of your employees, Lisa Smith, and I just wanted to call you and tell you that I appreciate – tell Lisa she did an excellent job – she went far, far beyond the call of duty. I brought four kids Friday and Saturday. She brought them some clothes because they didn’t have anything and I just (want) to speak with somebody that was in charge of her and tell how much she went far beyond the call of duty. I truly appreciated it. I thank you for having an employee that is like that. Thank you.

■ Lisa Smith is a CPS specialist at Muskegon County DHS.

Want to submit a letter?

Customer letters praising employees are very popular. To submit a letter for publication:

- Ensure your supervisor knows about this and approves.
- If a client sent the letter, have them sign a **Consent for Publication** form, which is downloadable from the MS Word template as form **0199**. This ensures we do not violate case confidentiality.
- Obtain the verbal permission of everyone named in the letter before sending it for publication; obtain the verbal permission of letter writers that do not have DHS cases.
- Send the letter and a copy of the signed consent form to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov or fax it to 517-373-8471.
- Include the **letter writer’s hometown** and the **job classification(s) of the employee(s)** cited in the letter.

Thanks!

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
Marianne Udow, Director • Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov